

**NEW PHASCOGALE TAPOOTAFU (BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE) RECORDS FROM CAPE YORK PENINSULA, AUSTRALIA.** *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 37(1):82. 1994:- *Phascogale tapootafu* is a species rarely seen, and sometimes difficult to find, even by spotlighting and trapping (Traill & Coates, 1993). Recent work (Sharpe, 1993) has shown that '... in prime habitat, one individual every 35ha is the norm. '... It is widely, but patchily, distributed in coastal areas of Australia with an average annual rainfall of between 500 and 2000mm (Cuttle, 1982; Cuttle in Strahan, 1983). In Queensland, it is well known in the southeast, but specimens or reliable sightings of *P. tapootafu* in other parts of the state are scant. There are records from the central coastal area (Rockhampton, 23°22'S 150°32'E; Ingram & Raven, 1991); and from northern Cape York Peninsula (Coen, 13°52'S 143°12'E; Lockhart R. area 13°04'S 143°24'E: Cuttle, 1982; Dixon & Huxley, 1985); and from skeletal remains in limestone caves at Chillagoe, on southeastern Cape York Peninsula, 17°09'S 144°31'E: Tresize, 1970. There is also one doubtful record from the western coast of Cape York Peninsula (Edward R. 14°39'S 142°03'E: D. Thomson, 1929, p.29 in Dixon & Huxley, 1985). This apparent sight record conflicts with data in the same reference (p.14): '... *Phascogale tapootafu* ... not uncommon in places on east coast; not seen on western fall of central range. '...

Some recent specimen and sight records shed light on the occurrence of this elusive species on Cape York Peninsula:

Nr McLeod Ck, McIvor R. Rd, 14°16'S 144°27'E, killed by cat, specimen not retained, 1 Sept 1976, L. Kuhnehan; Iron Ra., 12°43'S 143°17'E, Jun 1978, G. Czechura, sight only; Mt. Molloy, 2.5km N of Rifle Ck, 16°40'S 145°20'E, 1 Aug 1986, L. Moore & F. Crome, sight only; Emerald Ck on Cairns-Mareeba Rd, 16°58'S 145°28'E, 17 Jun 1992, J. Grant, sight only; Lamb Ra., Emu Ck Rd, 17°03'S 145°28'E, 5 Aug 1993, D.L. Storch, sight only; Lamb Ra., Emu Ck Rd 17°04'S 145°30'E, 5 Aug 1993, D.L. Storch & N. Goudberg, sight only; QMJM10591, dead on road, 20km W of Cooktown on McIvor R. Rd, 15°26'S 145°03'E, Nov 1993, L. Roberts; QMJM10579 dead on road, 8km S of McIvor R., McIvor Rd 15°20'S 145°04'E, 13 Jun 1994, J. Covacevich, L. Roberts; Bobardt Pt, Lockhart R., 12°58'S 143°30'E, no date recorded, W. Butcher, in Leung et al., 1994.

One of the two McIvor Rd specimens (QMJM10591) was found on a road which runs between a narrow band of riverine

rainforest and open woodland. The second (QMJM10579) was found dead on that road in sparse open woodland. Both Lamb Ra. observations were made in open forests on soils derived from granite. Ground cover is sparse in the area. Data on vegetation are not available for other localities at which specimens have been collected or observed.

#### Literature Cited

- Cuttle, P. 1982. Life history strategy of the dasyurid marsupial *Phascogale tapootafu*. Pp.13-22. In Archer, M. (ed.), 'Carnivorous marsupials'. Vol. 1. (Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales: Sydney).
- Dixon, J.M. & Huxley, L. (eds). 1985. 'Donald Thomson's mammals and fishes of northern Australia'. (Thomas Nelson Australia: Melbourne).
- Ingram, G.J. & Raven, R.J. (eds). 1991. 'An atlas of Queensland's frogs, reptiles, birds and mammals'. (Board of Trustees, Queensland Museum, Brisbane).
- Leung, L.K., Venables, B. & Pritchard, J. 1994. Terrestrial vertebrate fauna survey of the Iron Range area, Cape York Peninsula, 1993-1994. A report to the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage. Unpublished.
- Sharpe, L. 1993. The return of a little predator. *Australian Natural History* 24(7): 22-29.
- Strahan, R. (ed.). 1983. 'The Australian Museum complete book of Australian mammals'. The National Photographic Index of Australian wildlife. (Angus & Robertson: Sydney).
- Tresize, J. 1970. Bone deposits in Chillagoe Mungana Caves. *Journal of the North Queensland Naturalists Club* 37(152): 2-4.
- Traill, B.J. & Coates, T. 1993. Field observations on the Brush-tailed Phascogale *Phascogale tapootafu* (Marsupialia: Dasyuridae). *Australian Mammalogy* 16(1): 61-66.
- J.A. Covacevich, *Queensland Museum, Box 3300, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101, Australia*; L. Roberts, *Shipton's Flat, via Cooktown, Queensland 4871, Australia*; D.L. Storch, *Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage, Box 2066, Cairns 4871, Australia*; S. Van Dyck, *Queensland Museum, Box 3300, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101, Australia*; 10 September 1994.